THE MACRO- AND THE MICROSTRUCTURE OF THE FIGHTERS' TESTAMENT VIDEOS OF *HEZBOLLAH'S* MILITARY ARM

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an endeavour to shed light on the macro- and the microstructure of the fighters' testament videos of "*The Islamic Resistance*" – the military arm of Lebanese *Hezbollah*.

The significance of this paper has been derived from the fact that there is a paucity of research in this precise field. As a result of the dearth in studies about the fighters' testament videos broadcast by militant organisations in the Middle East, this paper provides illumination on this genre in the media discourse of *Hezbollah's* military arm. Thus, this paper contributes to the existing knowledge by analysing a sample of fighters' testament videos broadcasted by "*The Military Media Unit*" of "*The Islamic Resistance*." The testaments constitute a part of the media discourse of *Hezbollah's* military arm.

By utilising critical discourse analysis, the paper aims to show the structures of the testaments investigated, their forms of signification, how the image of the fighters is presented and how these testaments are embedded with religious beliefs. Thus, this paper illuminates how the fighters frame 'the self.' The results of the paper show the objectives of the testaments and provide an insight into the overall aims of the media discourse of *Hezbollah's* military arm.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, *Hezbollah*, Fighters' testament, Pseudonyms, Signs, "*The Islamic Resistance*", "*The Military Media Unit*"
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INTRODUCTION

The establishment of military media units by many militant organisations in the Middle East reflects not only their military tactics in the context of psychological warfare, but also their ideology and representation of 'the self' and 'the other.'

In this context, this paper aims to shed light on the fighters' testament videos produced by the media unit of *Hezbollah's* military arm "*The Islamic Resistance*". Hence, it pays attention to the theoretical implications of discourse after reviewing briefly the literature on the media discourse of *Hezbollah's* military arm.

Under the umbrella of critical discourse analysis, this paper aims to identify and analyse the macro- and the microstructure of this discourse in order to show how the fighters present their images and how "*The Military Media Unit*" of *Hezbollah's* military arm presents them as well. This representation is limited neither to the words in the testaments nor to the fighters' images in the videos. Thus, the analysis in this paper is textual and visual.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hezbollah (transliterated also into *Hizballah* and *Hizbullah*), which emerged unofficially in the Lebanese political and military theatres after the Israeli invasion in 1982, and officially in 1985, has a military arm called "*The Islamic Resistance*" which was created to fight the Israeli forces in south Lebanon (Harb, 2011; Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002). However, this military arm, which is backed by Iran, is considered one of the early guerrilla organisations in the Middle East to establish a military media unit in 1984 to document its military operations, to film military operations against the Israeli army barracks in south Lebanon and to film the testaments of its fighters (Osipova, 2011). In this regard, there are some studies about the military operations' videos of *Hezbollah's* military arm in the context of propaganda (e.g. El Houri, 2012; Harb, 2011). However, there is a dearth of studies about other media outputs of this military arm and consequently its media discourse.

In his explanation of the significance of *Ashura* the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, to *Hezbollah* and its military arm, Atrissi (2012) points out that "*The Islamic Resistance's*" fighters' testaments embedded with doctrines from this Shiites' historical tragedy. Except for this note, it seems there is a dearth of studies about the fighters' testament videos and their denotations.

This paper aims to bridge the gap in this field, because it focuses on the discourse of the fighters' testament videos broadcast by "*The Military Media Unit*" of "*The Islamic Resistance*" and aired via the *Al-Manar* satellite, which is operated by *Hezbollah*, to identify the embedded ideology and to show how the

fighters represent 'the self' and 'the other.'

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a critical discourse analysis approach. However, it is crucial initially to identify the denotation of discourse and what it implies a mass noun or a count noun.

The term discourse does not have a common definition, despite the fact that it is an old term and is classified historically in rhetoric as an art of speech for persuasion (Dijk, 1985). One of the early definitions of discourse is "every utterance (verbal or written) assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way" (Benvensite, 1971, pp. 208 & 209). Thus, many scholars define discourse as a term associated with language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

El-daly (2010) outlines some definitions of discourse related to their different usages, pointing out that some researchers use the terms 'discourse' and 'text' interchangeably and others use the term discourse only for the spoken language. He (ibid) defines the term discourse as mass and count nouns, pointing out that "'Discourse', used as a mass noun, means roughly the same as 'language use' or 'language-in-use'. As a count noun (a discourse), it means a relatively discrete subset of a whole language, used for specific social or institutional purposes. More specifically, 'discourse' as a mass noun and [in] its strict linguistic sense, refers to connected speech or writing occurring at suprasentential levels" (p. 248).

However, the development of sciences and aspects of social life means that every topic has its own language-in-use. This leads to the emergence of different discourses associated with different fields of knowledge and practice, such as media discourse, medical discourse and political discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In this context, Hall (2013) defines discourses of every field as "ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or *formation*) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society" (p. xxii).

Such construction of knowledge puts discourse at the heart of social practice between people who speak the same language or groups who share the same ideas (Dijk, 2000; Fairclough, 1995).

In this sense, discourse represents all features and shapes of language, such as linguistics and semiotics, or it represents a social status quo which can be viewed from different perspectives (Fairclough, 2005). Thus, the notion of discourse goes beyond description, because it categorises the social world and sheds light on issues, turning them into objects (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Parker, 2014).

However, Chouliaraki (2008) in her discussion of the meaning of discourse attempts to give a broad definition. She points out that, "The term discourse refers precisely to the capacity of meaning-making resources to constitute social reality, forms of knowledge and identity within specific social contexts and power relations" (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 674).

In summary, discourse can be viewed, based on all definitions, as a term which refers to several functions and features which then embed an impact. Thus, the discourse is:

- ➢ Expressing and creating social reality
- ➢ Representing identity
- ➢ Making knowledge
- ➢ Holding power
- ➢ A language or series of statements

This paper studies fighters' testament videos of fighters from *Hezbollah's* military arm. As these testaments constitute a part of media discourse of "*The Islamic Resistance*", this paper considers the analysed discourse a count noun.

Studying discourse emerged as an interdisciplinary discipline in humanities and social sciences in the mid-sixties of the last century (Dijk, 2007). However, critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed from discourse analysis (DA) as a new discipline in the 1970s through the work of Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress who aimed to study the language in a wider context and as an ideology (Hodge, 2012).

There are many approaches within critical discourse analysis (Bell & Garrett, 1998). However, the key scholars in this field are Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen who all established a critical discourse analysis network in 1991 (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Thus, there is no unique approach on how to conduct CDA and the researchers can develop their own approaches based on the nature of their studies (Dijk, 2003).

This paper considers Fairclough's (1995) three stages of analysis of discourse: description, interpretation and explanation. In this context, the paper considers these stages and Fairclough's amendments on Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach about studying the macro- and the microstructure of discourse. In his

comments, Fairclough (1995) argues that Dijk does not consider the notion of intertextuality and focuses instead on the interpersonal function of language and "news-making practices as stable structures which contribute to the reproduction of relations of discrimination and racist ideologies" (p. 30).

In his approach, Dijk (cited in Fairclough, 1995) sheds light on the analysis of the macro- and the microstructure of discourse where the first is concerned with the overall text and content and the second is concerned with the semantic relations and the units in the sentence. Notably, the macrostructure of an audio-visual material is "a sequence of events, or a sequence of images" (Dijk, 1980, p. 8).

Thus, this paper aims to study the macro- and the microstructure of a sample of fighters' testament videos to explore their signs, their denotations and embedded ideology, because the testaments play a role in framing the identity of *Hezbollah's* military arm.

DATA COLLECTION

As noted earlier, "*The Military Media Unit*" of "*The Islamic Resistance*" presents its fighters' testaments after their death in videos and screens them via the *Al-Manar* satellite. In an attempt to select a sample for analysis, the author found a video which includes 32 fighters' testamentsproduced by "*The Military Media Unit*" of *Hezbollah's* military arm, screened via *Al-Manar* and downloaded on YouTube under the name "*The Testaments of 'The True Pledge's' Martyrs*" (Al-Manar, 2013). However, the whole duration of this sample, which includes 32 fighters' testament videos, is one hour, 42 minutes and 55 seconds.

The language in the fighters' testaments is Arabic. Thus, the author translates the extracted names and quotes for this paper.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis in this paper considers the macro- and the microstructure of the selected sample of fighters' testament videos. The intended analysis, as noted earlier, considers Dijk's approach and Fairclough's comments on this approach. As the data are audio-visual, the analysis of the macro- and the microstructure of the testaments is not purely textual. It also pays attention to the denotations of the footage.

The Macrostructure of the Analysed Fighters' Testament

The macrostructure of fighters' testament videos can sketch a part of the image of the fighters in *Hezbollah's* military arm. In observing the chosen sample, it seems that the 32 fighters' testaments have the same macrostructure. Every fighter's testament video is nearly three minutes in length.

Every testament includes a lead 25 seconds and an end 27 seconds. The beginning and the end include graphic art-work to constitute a video within a series of fighters' testament videos. It starts graphically by showing the Quranic verse *"And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the Book shall be set in place, and the prophets and witnesses will be brought. And judgment will be made between them with truth, and they will not be wronged" (39: 69).* Following this verse, a shot shows a few fighters walking with the sun in front of them. Later, a shot shows persons carrying bagpipes and then the phrase, "*We are your true pledge*" (in Arabic) emerges graphically with non-diegetic music. The next close-in shot focuses on the logo and the rifle inside *Hezbollah's* flag, then shows the Quranic verse written above it, *"or verily the party of Allah, they are the victors" (05: 56).* With the background music continuing, an image shows fighters carrying a coffin of one of their comrades, which is covered by *Hezbollah's* flag. Shortly before the fighter appears to present his testament, the term "*Allah's Men*" (in Arabic) is inserted in *Hezbollah's* flag close to the logo.

After the fighter finishes his testament, the bagpipe music returns and a graphic image shows white birds (like pigeons) in flight to symbolise the demise of the fighter. Notably, this image is used as a background after the fighter finishes his testament until the end of the video. The next close-in shot focuses on the term "*The Islamic Resistance*", the motto in *Hezbollah's* flag. Then, a shot shows a few fighters walking in a field of wildflowers. Following these scenes where the close-in shot still focuses on the term "*The Islamic Resistance*", the video ends with a quote from the Quranic verse *"and they have not changed in the least" (33: 23)* and the caption "*The Military Media - The Islamic Resistance*."

It can be concluded from this description that "*The Military Media Unit*" has unified graphically the fighters' testaments and included with them religious meanings.

The Image of the Fighters

In the fighters' testament videos, the image of the fighters is divided into two genres: their image while they read their testaments and their image presented by "*The Military Media Unit*" as a result of video editing and inserting footage of the fighters. Hence, the analysis considers both genres to show the image of the fighters in

their posthumous videos.

In observing the fighters' testament videos focusing on the image of the fighters, the following can be concluded:

- Every fighter is framed graphically where *Hezbollah's* flag is floating on the left hand side of the screen. The fighter is defined by the subtitle "*The Mujahed Martyr*" (in Arabic), followed by his name and pseudonym, and the term "*Allah's Men*" is written vertically to the right of the subtitle.
- Thirty fighters present their testaments in the bush. Some seem to be sitting under a tree. However, the two fighters Ali Mahmoud Saleh (Bilal Adshit) and Hussein Sabra (Abo Mahdi) were sitting in an office. In both these videos, *Hezbollah's* flag seems to lie on the table.
- All fighters wear camouflage uniforms and read their testaments from a paper. However, every video is edited to cut some pieces from the testaments and to insert footage, such as showing the fighter working on the weapon he specialised in, walking in the bush, carrying his rifle, smiling, praying, reading the Quran and kissing it. In addition, footage of a few fighters carrying their rifles in a field of windflowers is inserted in many videos. Some videos show a part of the Lebanese flag with a few fighters walking nearby it.
- The fighters seem spontaneous while they read their testaments. Some fighters are filmed while they are writing their testaments. Remarkably, many fighters make grammatical and spelling mistakes. The feature of spontaneity seems to be deliberately maintained by "*The Military Media Unit*" to indicate that the fighters themselves wrote their testaments without any interference.
- The fighters endeavour to be courageous while they are directing parts of their testaments to their parents and families. Thus, they do not cry or show their tears.

After showing how "*The Military Media Unit*" frames the image of fighters, the following section aims to shed light on the general structure of the fighters' testaments before analysing their microstructure.

The General Structure of the Testaments

The chosen sample of 32 testaments belongs to fighters killed during the July War in 2006 where "*The Military Media Unit*" aired their wills later. However, these testaments, as observed in the analysed videos, have undergone editing process. As a result of editing, the majority of these testaments have no clear introduction and it seems there are omitted sentences and/or paragraphs. However, there are similarities in the beginning of many testaments where the fighters send their regards to "*The Islamic Resistance's*" leaders. Furthermore, there are similarities in terms of the testaments' contents although the paragraphs do not have a similar distribution. Furthermore, the majority of these testaments end with the fighter uncovering his identity.

THE MICROSTRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSED TESTAMENTS

This section aims to analyse the contents of the testaments in order to identify their embedded signs and interpret them, because they constitute a part of "*The Islamic Resistance's*" media discourse.

As observed in the video, every testament has an individual author who is a fighter. Thus, there are 32 authors of the testaments and the producer of the testaments' videos is organisational - "*The Military Media Unit*" of *Hezbollah's* military arm. This multiplicity of authors, grammatical errors and the dearth of metaphoric use shift the focus of the microstructural analysis into another dimension. Thus, the analysis considers the testaments' themes. In addition to the themes, the analysis considers in identifying the embedded signs the pseudonyms used by the 32 fighters.

The Fighters' Testaments' Themes

In observing the contents of the analysed testaments, it can be concluded that every testament contains short messages with sentimental and ideological themes. However, all themes in the testaments are considered ideological, because the fighters include sentimental themes with religious implications as well.

The sentimental themes in the testaments are the messages directed by the fighter to his mother, father, and to wife and children if he is married. Regarding the messages directed to his parents, the fighter asks them to forgive him and to be patient, reminding them of Islamic parables from the Battle of Karbala in 680 when the Prophet Mohammad's grandson Imam Al-Hussein was killed with members of his family and companions when they faced the army of Yazid, the then Umayyad Caliph, in Iraq.

The following excerpt provides an example on how one of the fighters addresses his mother:

"... My compassionate mother, I advise you by patience and prayer and to take Lady Zainab [Imam Al-Hussein's sister] as your model and thereupon you will be proud in the Hereafter. Also, I advise you to utter trilling cries of joy when you hear the news of my martyrdom..."

From Hassan Ahmad Akil's Testament

In this quoted excerpt, the fighter provides his Islamic understanding of the concept of 'martyrdom.' In deconstructing this testament to show the fighter's intention in general, and the phrase, "*I advise you to utter trilling cries of joy when you hear the news of my martyrdom*" in particular, it can be seen that the fighter considers his 'martyrdom' a wedding ceremony. For the fighter concerned, the ceremony is the inception of new life promised by Allah to the 'martyrs' in the Hereafter. This concept of martyrdom concludes that the coming life is immortal and includes the access to all benefits in e paradise, which are not limited to marriage to the fair virgins who are called in Quran "*Hoor-Alyn*" (Alagha, 2011; Fadlullah, 2002).

In a similar vein of sentimental themes, the married fighters direct their messages to their wives and children. Generally, they ask them to be patient and complete the fighters' mission by educating the children well. In addition, they ask their children to follow the right Islamic path in their lives. The following excerpt provides an example on how one of the fighters addresses his little daughter:

"How much I love that future day when I may see you wearing your white dress, my angel, to present you as a bride. But, be patient my little girl... May Allah reward well this patience. Let [Imam] Hussein's little daughter Sokayna be your intercessor in paradise. At the end, peace be on your eyes, on your angelical face; and the meeting will be with the beloved Prophet and his purified family..."

From Samer Mohammad Najm's Testament

These two examples show that the sentimental themes reflect the cultural and religious values of the fighters. From a cultural perspective, the fighters show the strength of family ties. However, they show from a religious perspective the importance of taking figures in the Battle of Karbala as models for their families. Thus, the majority of the analysed testaments mention this battle and a number of its "heroes", such as Imam Al-Hussein, his brother Al-Abbas and his sister Zainab. Furthermore, some fighters reiterate in their testaments aphorisms attributed to this historical battle. For example, the fighter Yasser Mustafa Sabra quoted in his testament, when he addressed his leadership, the following adage said by Imam Al-Hussein's companions, "*... If we are killed, then our bodies burnt, and [our ashes] thrown in the air [and this action repeated] seventy times, we'll never leave you alone*" (From Yasser Mustafa Sabra's Testament). However, the following adage, which is attributed to Lady Zainab at the end of the Battle of Karbala, is used by some fighters to show the level of belief and patience, to provide parables and to indicate that the battle was for the sake of Allah: "*O' Allah, please accept our sacrifice.*"

The perpetual remembrance of this historical tragedy and intertextuality in the testaments reveal that the Battle of Karbala's doctrines (The commemoration of Imam Al-Hussein's martyrdom is known as *Ashura*) are entrenched in the fighters' minds and hearts, because they reflect their cultural and religious identity, as Muslim Shiites' *Twelvers*, or in other words their overt ideology.

Similarly, the ideological themes may be religious or reflect the fighters' views of the conflict with Israel and may be both. Table 1 shows the ideological themes in the analysed testaments and whether they are religious, related to the conflict with Israel or both.

TABLE 1- THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE IDEOLOGICAL THEMES IN THE FIGHTERS' TESTAMENTS

Ideological Themes	Religious	Conflict
Greetings to the Prophet Mohammad and his Family	To reflect self-identity from religious perspective	
Greetings to the Islamic Resistance's leaders, Imam Khomeini and Imam Khamenei	To reflect self-identity from an organisational perspective	To reflect belonging to the military arm "*The Islamic Resistance*" of Hezbollah which is fighting Israel
Continuing the Resistance in Lebanon; Protecting the Resistance	To be rewarded in the Hereafter	To liberate the Lebanese occupied territories and eliminate Israel from existence.
Liberating Al-Quds	As Imam Khomeini advised	To defeat and eliminate Israel from existence
Greeting the Palestinians and their Intifada; Asking for continuity of the Resistance in Palestine	To support an Islamic issue	To support the Intifada
Making the life a path to the Hereafter	To be rewarded by entry to paradise	To join the resistance
Beware of the devil	To keep the self purified	
Asking women to wear the Islamic dress (Hijab)	Hijab is an Islamic duty for Muslim women	
The importance of educating children academically and religiously	Educating children in the moral and lessons of the Prophet Mohammad's family so as to be role models	To join the resistance

The Importance of martyrdom and Jihad in Islam	To undertake an Islamic duty and be like Imam Al-Hussein's soldiers and members of his family	To win the war against the enemy or to gain martyrdom
Purification during fighting	To consider purification an introduction to perform Jihad	To gain superiority in fighting Israel
Following the line of *Wilayat al-Faqih* (the Authority or the Rule of the Jurist)	To adopt this theory in Islamic ruling and obey the concerned jurist	To transfer the flag of jihad to Imam Al-Mahdi when he appears from his long occultation

These themes, which reflect the identity of "*The Islamic Resistance's*" fighters, show the significance of the Palestinian cause in the fighters' words. Hence, nine fighters in the aired testaments mentioned Palestine, Palestinian Intifada, Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa mosque. Furthermore, the themes also reflect the fighters' ideological views as they follow the Islamic theory in ruling, *the Authority of the Jurisprudent (the Jurist)*, which is called in Arabic '*Wilayat al-Faqih*.'

The Fighters' Identity and their Pseudonyms

As noted previously, the testaments hold contents which reflect the fighters' identity. Thus, the fighters reveal in the testaments their religious beliefs, their loyalties and their views towards the conflict with Israel. In addition, the fighters identify themselves at the end of the testaments in two forms. Firstly, they describe themselves with down to earth words. Secondly, they use pseudonyms to name themselves.

Regarding the first form, when the fighter ends his testament he generally uses the terms "your brother…", "the poor slave…", "the poor slave of Allah…" and "the poor slave who needs Allah's mercy…", before providing his name and/or his pseudonym. These terms reflect the religious concepts of the fighters. Notably, when the fighter uses the term "your brother…", it seems he addresses his comrades and the followers of "*The Islamic Resistance*." However, when the fighter uses the term "the poor slave…", he expresses his intended level of worship to Allah in order to reach paradise.

On the other hand, it seems that every fighter in "*The Islamic Resistance*" has a pseudonym, as shown in the testaments. The pseudonym of the fighter is inserted by "*The Military Media Unit*" in the subtitle after the fighter's name. Thus, the editing process by the unit of the testaments did not affect the pseudonyms, because they are linked to the fighters' names.

The study of pseudonyms is significant in further uncovering the identity of the fighters, because the pseudonyms whether chosen by the fighters themselves or their organisation reflect 'the self.' Hence, naming is considered a social practice and a cultural process to identify the self and distinguish it from the other (Suleiman, 2011). Thus, using pseudonyms allows an insight into how the fighters frame their identities, or how the organisation frames their identities, through naming.

The onomastic choices of pseudonyms by the fighters in the 32 analysed testaments can be classified into four categories: Islamic names related to the Prophets and Muslim Shiite's Imams, father of (…) which is called in Arabic "*Konya*", names linked with towns and names which describe good features. Table 2 shows the 32 fighters' pseudonyms and their categories.

TABLE 2- THE FIGHTERS' PSEUDONYMS IN THE ANALYSED TESTAMENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICATIONS

Fighters' Names	Pseudonyms	Categories	Meanings
Ibrahim Haidar Haidar & Hassan Mohammad Shbib	Walaa (this pseudonym is used by two fighters in the analysed testaments)	Name describes a good feature	Walaa means loyal
Ibrahim Khalil Khalaf	Jihad Alghrbiyya	Name linked to a town	Alghrbiyya refers to a town in south Lebanon which the fighter may have been born or lived
Taysir Mohammad Zein Al-deen	Malak	Name describes a good feature	Malak means an angel
Jihad Malik Hammod	Karrar	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite Imam	It is one of the first Shiite's Imam Ali ben Abi Taleb's, names
Hosam Abdulhadi Al-Mosawi	Sayyed Kazem	Name describes a good feature and relates to a Muslim Shiite's Imam	Sayyed indicates that the fighter's family roots go to Imam Ali ben Abi Taleb and Kazem is the name of the seventh Muslim Shiite's Imam
Hass'an Ali Maatouk	Rabee	Name describes a good feature	Rabee means spring
Hassan Ahmad Akil	Ali Ahmad	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite Imam and the Prophet Muhammad	Ali is a name of a Muslim Shiite Imam and Ahmad is one of the Prophet's names.
Hassan Ahmad Nasser & Mustafa Ali Zalzali	Sadek (this pseudonym used by two fighters in the analysed testaments)	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite Imam	Sadek is the name of the sixth Muslim Shiite's Imam
Hussein Sabra	Abo Mahdi	Mahdi's father (Konya)	Abo means father and Mahdi is the name of the twelfth Muslim Shiite Imam
Hussein Youssef Salman	Komail	Name describes a good feature	Komail is the name of one of Imam's Ali close companions. He was well educated and characterised by piety
Rani Adnan Bazzi	Hajj Hatem	Name describes a good feature	Hajj means the person who performed pilgrimage duty in Mecca and Hatem is an old Arabic name which signifies a generous man
Samer Mohammad Najm	Sajed	Name describes a good feature	Sajed means a person who performs prostration to

			Allah. The term signifies a high level of worship, because prostration is generally performed by Muslims during their daily prayers
Akif Hussein Al-Mosawi	Abo Hadi	Hadi's father (Konya)	'Abo' means father and Hadi is the name of the tenth Muslim Shiite's Imam. Notably, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah is called Abo Hadi
Hassan Abdul-Hussein Fahs	Abo Sadek	Sadek's father (Konya)	'Abo' means father and Sadek is the name of the sixth Muslim Shiite's Imam
Abdullah Amin Sha'aito	Mojtaba	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite's Imam	Mojtaba is the name of the second Muslim Shiite's Imam
Alaa' Ali Yassin	Mohtadi	Name describes a good feature	Mohtadi means the person who is guided to the right way
Ali Ahmad Al-Dur	Baqir	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite's Imam	Baqir is the name of the fifth Muslim Shiite's Imam
Ali Abbas Al-Mosawi	Sayyed Imad	Name describes a good feature	Sayyed indicates that the fighter's family roots go to Imam Ali Ali ben Abi Taleb. Notably, Imad coincides with the name of the Islamic Resistance's late commander Imad Mughniyeh
Ali Abdul-Hassan Khalil	Mortada	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite Imam	Mortada is the name of the first Muslim Shiite's Imam Ali ben Abi Talib
Ali Mahmoud Saleh	Bilal Adshit	Name describes a good feature and linked to a town	Bilal coincides with a name of one of the Prophet Mohammad's companions who was calling for prayer. Adshit refers to a town in south Lebanon in which the fighter may have been born or lived
Ali Mustafa Al-Dolbani	Ibrahim	Name of a Prophet	Ibrahim is considered a Prophet for Muslims, according to the holy Quran.
Imad Ahmad Saad	Abo Ali Farooq	Ali Farooq's father (Konya)	Ali is a name of a Muslim Shiite Imam and Farooq means a sword, which divides between the bad and the good things. Notably, the Muslim Caliph Omar ben Al-Khatab was called Al-Farooq
Kamal Mohammad Afif	Abo Qassem	Kassem's father (Konya)	The Prophet Mohammad is called Abo Al-Qassem
Mohammad Khalil Hijazi	Mihrab	Name describes a good feature	Mihrab means the prayer niche or the place for prostration
Mohammad Kamal Soror	Ali Talib	Name relates to a Muslim Shiite Imam	Ali is a name of four Muslim Shiite Imams. However, Talib coincides with the name of the first Imam Ali ben Abi Talib's eldest brother
Mohammad Youssef Dimashq	Jawad Ayta	Name linked to a town and relates to a Muslim Shiite's Imam	Jawad is the name of the ninth Muslim Shiite's Imam and Ayta signifies a southern Lebanese town in which the fighter may have been born or lived
Musa Amin Marji	Alaa Blida	Name linked to a town	Alaa is an Arabic name which signifies exaltedness. However, Blida signifies a southern Lebanese town in which the fighter may have been born or lived
Nadir Khodr Al-Jarkas	Abo Hassan Sida	Hassan's father (Konya) and linked to a town	The first and eighth Muslim Shiite Imams are called Abo Al-Hassan. However, Sida signifies the city of Sidon in South Lebanon in which the fighter may have been born or lived
Yasser Mustafa Sabra	Abo Mustafa	Mustafa' father (Konya)	The Prophet Muhammad is called Abo Al-Mustafa
Khalid Ali Abdullah	Hilal	Name describes a good feature	Hilal is an Arabic name, which means "crescent." Notably, the crescent is a symbol which signifies Muslims as the cross signifies Christians

The Signs in the Fighters' Testaments

The analysed fighters' testament videos contain words and images. In this regard, it is crucial to delve into these testaments to identify the embedded signs in both the images and the words.

Barthes (1964; 1972; 1977) is considered one of the key scholars in semiotics, because he paid further attention to study of the sign whether it has a linguistic form or not.

In observing the fighters' testament videos, it seems that there are stretches of footage impregnated with signs. Similarly, there are words and aphorisms in the testaments impregnated with meanings as well.

Regarding the representational images, "*The Military Media Unit*" presents the fighters' testaments in a congruent way to ensure a similar signification by the intended Arab viewers. In this context, the unit enhances the 'mythical representation' of the fighters through showing their piety as a result of high level of religious faith, which enlightens their road of jihad. Table 3 shows the repetitive visual signs in the analysed fighters' testaments.

TABLE 3- THE SIGNIFICATIONS OF IMAGES IN THE ANALYSED FIGHTERS' TESTAMENT VIDEOS

Images (Signs)	Significations	Comments
Wearing a camouflage uniform - every fighter	To signify the fighters belong to a military organisation	The repetition of this symbolic image by the unit intends show "The Islamic Resistance" as a liberation movement
Carrying a rifle in the field	To signify the fighters will not abandon their weapons	Through repetition of this indexical image, the unit sh "The Islamic Resistance" continuing the resistance Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in May 2000
Reading the holy Quran	To signify the fighters are Muslims and thus their war has religious characteristics	Through repetition of this iconic image, it seems the intends to confirm to other Muslims that "The Isl Resistance's" fighters are Muslims
Kissing and Walking under the holy Quran which is carried by another while carrying their rifles	To signify the fighters are asking Allah's blessing in their military actions	It seems that this repetitive iconic image shows the constitutes a ritual for the fighters' protection
Supplicating by raising the hands to the sky	To signify the fighters are asking Allah to attend to their needs	This repetitive indexical image seems to be cut by unit f the fighters' prayers and isolated to underpin the meanin trust in Allah
Prostration in prayer	To signify the fighters are worshippers of Allah	Similar to the previous sign, this repetitive iconic imag isolated from other prayer's actions to emphasise religious meaning of the sign
Smiling	To signify joy, happiness and calm	This repetitive indexical image intends to show the figh are not sad or depressed

In portraying the images, as shown in Table 3, "*The Military Media Unit*" uses the rhetorical principles repetition and isolation to saturate and emphasise the connotations of the visual signs in order to impact the viewers and induce them to support the actions of "*The Islamic Resistance*." According to Barthes (1972), repetition, and to some extent proximity, in the visual sign are important concepts to the mythologist "to decipher the myth: it is the insistence of a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention" (p. 119).

Considering the analysis in this case, the mythologist is organisational. It is "*The Military Media Unit*" of *Hezbollah's* military arm, because this is the producer of the testaments' videos. In this regard, the unit presents a mythical sign in portraying the fighters as ordinary people like the supporters and other Muslims on the one hand and extraordinary people who have spilt blood to defeat Israel on the other hand. In analysing further its signification, the emerged mythical sign of the fighters points out their sacrifice and heroism and imposes these meanings on the viewers.

In addition to the mythical sign, there is a sign which requires deconstruction to reveal its embedded meaning which is unsaid by "*The Military Media Unit*." In applying Derrida's analysis regarding the sign's heterogeneity (Derrida, 1997), the sign of the fighters reading the holy Book, Quran, or praying has spatial and temporal characteristics. The latter is hidden and has to be discovered following a trace. In this regard, this religious sign of reading the Quran and praying has signification which requires going beyond the first order of meaning to unveil the hidden denotation. Understanding that "*The Islamic Resistance's*" fighters are Muslim Shiites (Alagha, 2006, 2011), the temporal characteristics of the analysed sign urge the researcher to trace the absent signification. In deconstructing the sign by tracing the context and the intended audience, it can be argued that the intended viewers are not only Muslim Shiites, because the testaments were screened after the July War in 2006 on *Al-Manar* television which started airing to Arab World after May 2000. As a result of deconstruction, the hidden meaning of the sign is to show other Muslims, who are from different sects in the Arab World, that "*The Islamic Resistance's*" fighters do not differ from them, because they are praying like other Muslims and reading the same holy Book.

On the other hand, the analysed testaments include textual signs. These signs are presented by the fighters in their testaments to signify 'the self' and 'the enemy.' It is notable that the signs to signify the self-identity are religious and reflect the Shiite's doctrines. The interpretation and explanation of these symbolic signs, based on Pierce's triadic model, can lead to an exploration of their embedded meanings (Peirce, 1974). Table 4 shows the triadic signs in the analysed fighters' testaments.

TABLE 4- THE TEXTUAL SIGNS IN THE ANALYSED FIGHTERS' TESTAMENTS

Representamen	Interpretant	Referent (Object)
Al-Zahra'	Prophet's Mohammad daughter	Al-Zahra' is a model for an aggrieved woman (e.g. Hasani, 2012).
Zainab	Al-Zahra's daughter and Imam Al-Hussein's sister	Zainab is a model of a patient and strong woman (e.g. Qarashi, 2001).
Imam Al-Hussein	Al-Zahra's son	Imam Al-Hussein is a model of the free and brave le who sacrificed himself and his family for the sake of Muslim nation (e.g. Tabātabā'ī, 1977).
Imam Al-Mahdi (or Al-Mehdi)	The twelfth Muslim's Shiite Imam	Based on Muslim Shiites *Twelvers'* creed, this Imam is alive and he will appear to help justice prevail in the w (e.g. Tabasi, 2003).
Oppressors (Istikbar)	Israel and USA	Israel is the occupier; USA supports its occupation imposes oppression throughout the world. The fighter N Amin Marji used Khomeini's adage, "America is the big Satan." However, the fighter Hassan Ahmad Akil raised slogan, "Death to America and Israel." The concept of d is reiterated in Hass'an Ali Maatouk's incitement "annihilate the Zionist enemy wherever [its troops] exi Lebanon."

The presented explanation of the signs (the referent) can be traced in the literature about *Hezbollah's* religious beliefs, particularly in its first manifesto (e.g. Alagha, 2006). In addition, the analysed testaments represent Israel and the Israeli army using negative labels such as the Israeli enemy; the rapist enemy; the Zionist enemy and the Zionists. Notably, these testaments, as shown in Table 4, include some raging terms against Israel and the United States of America. One of the rare metaphoric usages in the testaments is the term "germ" in "Israel is the germ of corruption" (From Musa Amin Marji's Testament). According to this fighter, Israel signifies a bug infecting the body and thus it should be eradicated. The fighter did not attribute his quote. However, this phrase was originally used by the late Imam Khomeini (Mohsen, 2011). This reveals the impact of Khomeini on the fighters' ideology. In this context, the meaning of this phrase aligns with another aphorism said by Khomeini, "Israel is a cancerous gland" (Rida, 2013).

CONCLUSION

This paper has shed light on the discourse of an output of "*The Military Media Unit*" of Hezbollah's military arm. This output contains fighters' testament videos. Thus, the author has opted for analysis of a sample of fighters' testament videos produced by the unit and aired primarily via the *Al-Manar* satellite, which is operated by *Hezbollah*.

Drawing on a critical discourse analysis approach, this paper has analysed the macro- and the microstructure of 32 fighters' testament videos.

On the macrostructure level, the paper described the structure of the fighters' testament videos and how "*The Military Media Unit*" of "*The Islamic Resistance*" presents their images.

On the microstructure level, the paper has explored the meaning of the onomastic choices of the 32 fighters' pseudonyms. It revealed that the majority of the pseudonyms reflect the religious beliefs of the fighters and consequently the ideology of their organisation. Also, the paper has identified the embedded signs in the testaments, because they signify 'the good' self-identity and 'the bad' identity of 'the other' who is "*The Islamic Resistance's*" enemy. In this regard, the analysis revealed that the fighters used religious signs to reflect their identities and to provide Muslim Shiite's parables to the addressees. In addition, the analysis showed the impact of Imam Khomeini's doctrines on the fighters, regarding their views towards Israel and the United States of America.

Towards this end, it seems from the analysis that the aim of airing the fighters' testament videos is to mobilise the followers and supporters against Israel. It also seems that *Hezbollah's* military arm intends to assure other Arabs and other Muslims that the fighters, who are Lebanese Muslim Shiites' *Twelvers*, are ordinary people similar to them. This representation can be considered another form of mobilisation in the analysed videos.

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